

The Green Fields

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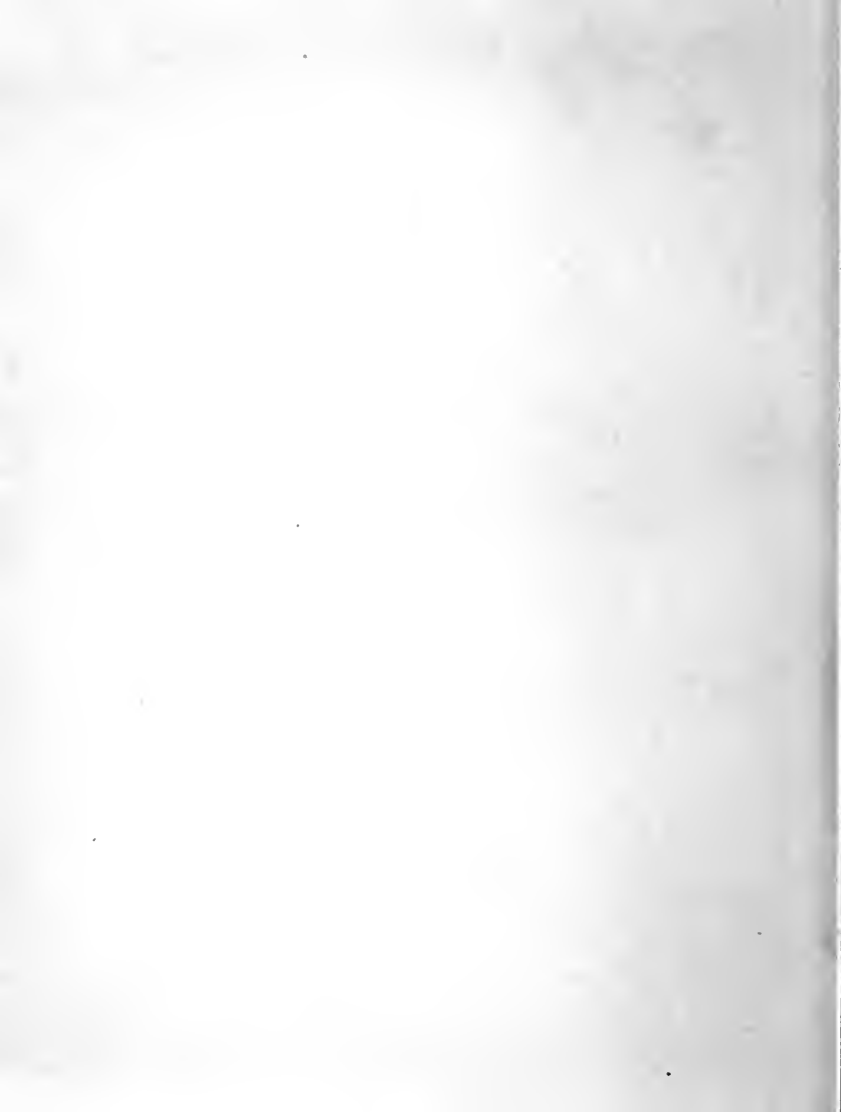


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THE GREEN FIELDS

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BY

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LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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TO
PROFESSOR WALTER RALEIGH,
OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

"*What's he, the tall fellow?*"

"You may say the great one.

There's not his like in Oxford, a full scholar,
He follows after learning like a boy
That calls his friends and fellows join the game.
When he hath read in our Elizabethans
His tuneable unaffectioned voice that loved the matter
Has in the grey room conjured up the sunshine
And all the singing of a summer meadow.
—Sir, if I were a painter, I would draw him
Standing colossally above his fellows;
Give him a book (which seeing it should contain
The learning that you cannot find in books)
Should be no smaller than a galleon's sail,
Lend him, for a desk to read from, Magdalen tower.
Then would you see him shake the pinnacles,
While from the ground the murmuring schools applauded
The echo of his wit.—But come, to dinner!
And after dinner you shall praise the city."

THE CLOISTERERS.



My thanks are due to the Editor of the *Oxford Magazine* for permission to reprint many of the poems in this book. Also to the Editors of the *Isis* and *Varsity*.

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Spring Song

In winter men like moles
Have little ease,
Bring pansies and round bowls
Of primroses
To glad the waking sense
With thoughts of winter parted hence.

Bring in thy gentler mood,
Though groves are bare,
The anemony o' th' wood
Light as the air,
Whose blue stain on the white
Marks winter dying, spring in sight.

Your moths and dragons bring,
With swallows fleet,
That brush with skiey wing
The water-sheet.
Give to the starlings fled
The high-stacked towers they love to tread.

Bid cranes the clear skies thread,
O'er woodlands flying,
Where fauns wake from the reed
Songs sweet in dying,
Whilst we, as dawn breaks gray,
Priestlike with singing bless thy day.

Sonnet

Lo the times call to act and thou dost lie
As on charmed shipboard, where the silken pride
Of sail nor pennant stir, or do but glide
To song well sung and elfin minstrelsy.
Thus dost thou drug thy wits by living free
From life's *mélée*, so by the hedgerow side,
This drunkard shall the livelong night abide,
While the stars light within the linden tree.
Men toiled for progress with the world's first sun,
The living vassels to the yet unborn,
And being unborn the dead: and all this stir
Mere instinct, and content they have not won.
Thou art, at least in numbers, unforlorn,
What then, sail on thou happy voyager!

The Recoming of Aphrodite

Lo, in her dove-drawn car
Of crystal sheen,
Floats from Heaven's fairest star
The Cyprian queen.
Dull earth that time so shears,
Wake to the dawn of brighter-coloured years,
The exquisite white hand of Aphrodite steers!

Like now, as when more blessed,
In stranger lands,
Her sea-wet foot first pressed
The tawny sands,
And to Heaven's symphony unscrolled
Risen from the sea she stood and backward rolled
The clouds of night, and morning burst in showers
of gold.

Song shall be no more mute
In thy just rite,
Fauns through the beechen flute
Shall breathe delight,
And youths not cramped within a street
Shall race on hills where trod your unshod feet,
And sing like larks at morning soaring from the
wheat.

Fairies

Fields are green firmaments,
Studded with primrose stars,
In countless constellations.
From dull care free,
Like fairies from the merry court
Of Mab the queen,
Little maids wandering linger
And gather in the glades
Cowslips, violets, and golden kingcups.

O little folks,
You are, in truth, the real fairies,
Pin your buttercups to blow with the breeze,
And nestle against your necks!
Be daisy-chains your chains of office!
In spring-time is fancy,
In spring-time is silvery laughter.
In winter are no flowers,
No birds sing in winter.
The very heart is frozen.
Care waits on age.

Mercury of the Ways

Here the pine trees sway high in the Heaven,
And the rocky snow-peaks rise above them,
Rest, Traveller, rest, from the heat of the sun
Where the water leaps down from the ice.

Drink here, but drink sparingly, O Stranger,
The path stretches flinty before you,
And here, as is due, sweet praises be sung
To Mercury, Lord of the Ways.

Wadham Gardens

Blush pinks, and marigold, and columbine,
And lawns and elm-trees old as history,
Where wise owls ponder, bats a-hunting fly
By blossoms purple as the southern wine.
Lovely, as was that garden duly kept
By him who dared foretell the dire event
Of an old king thrust from his government.
Heart-broken and unseen the princess wept.
Here Spring walks first and Summer lingers last.
Out of this garden should I wish to stray,
May languorous poppies lock my senses fast,
And honeysuckle bind me night and day.
O, may the roses ail in battle rout
Pierce me with thorns to bar my passage out.

Night Flies !

The moon like a paper lantern
Is hung to pleasure the day new-born,
From the rick is the grey cock crowing,
And the early hunter has blown his horn !

Sea Waves

I lay on a moorland
O'erlooking the sea,
The wind through the cornfield
Swept whisperingly.

The seagull swerved
O'er the winding strand,
The white foam kissed
The velvet sand.

The Poet's Song

Time's slaying yet,
—So fierce of wing—
This violet,
This pretty thing,
But with the Spring
His heart's perfume
Shall fill my room.

When Time me too,
—As sure ere long—
Shall claim for due,
'Tis little wrong,
For in my song
Though I depart
Is soul and heart.

Hope and Memory

Hope like a thrush ere day had well begun
Sang clear, and Memory at set of sun
A nightingale. Life caught the burden sweet
Nor feared Death's shadow at his horse's feet.

Prince Arthur in Prison

(Daybreak)

Never was this old world, save at this hour,
So old before : all life ebbs fast away.
My fingers are dead, my very heart is ice.
The freezing wind that moans from court to court
Questions, I think, if dawn will ever wake.
This hour men kill themselves ; and the great pulse
Of things created, the physicians say,
Almost stops beating. What if the heart of the
world
Should never more force sap into the trees,
Nor blood into mens' veins, but all heart-sick,
This globe should spin no more, men rise no more,
But sleeping die, nor wake till judgment day ?
—What great long shadows ! There's a proverb says
Men are but such, and surely such am I,
Though Geoffrey's son : cheated of name and crown,
Forgotten here. O, who will weep, who know,
When I am dead !

At last some streaks of day !
Saffron and silver, but so sickly pale
It makes more black these bars and battlements.

And now a linnet, twittering far away,
Perhaps in some old garden drenched with dew
Where larkspur stands his seven-foot from the earth
Stained all with opal—where great arbours are,
And sweet white roses. O that I were free
Anywhere, anywhere, so I were from here
Where one can hardly breathe. The birds again !
O birds, wake in the dark to life and light,
But I dread darkness most when day's most bright.

(A Keeper)

Nay, sleep again, fear nothing, little Prince.

Tithon

Tithon, first son of that Laomedon
That built old Troy with sweet Apollo's song,
At sunrise in the dew-wet fields alone
The goddess Eos saw that loved him long.
Kissing she bore him to her eastern cave
Lost in the mazes of her golden hair,
And gave him endless length of life to have,
For which to heaven he offered ceaseless prayer.
Forsaken, every glass upon the wall
Mocks him with biting age that Death passed by,
The cobwebs cluster in the palace hall,
The clock's heart stops, the old retainers die;
But one in motley serves him land and sea,
Idiot and starveling Immortality.

Fairy Time

The clock has chimed from the belfry
And wide to see,
The owl's round eyes grow rounder,
Ah what stares he ?

The light of the coals is dying
So warm and bright,
Each wicked candle flickers
And bids " Goodnight ! "

A creaking comes from the stair-case,
The door stands wide,—
The door that was shut so firmly—
What comes inside ?

With plumes of a sparrow's feather,
And shoes of mouse,
Fairies that fade at cock-crow
Fill all the house.

Little folk of the village
Bring sweet good-luck,
Bring not the gibes and jesting
Of goblin Puck,

Rather to him who sings you ;
And has so long,
Only a fairy sixpence
For a fairy song.

The White High Road

Three young girls on the white high road
With laughing eyes and a light light tread,
When the trees fantastic shapes put on
And the sea seems lead.

Ink-black clouds float over the moon,
But their little foot page is in no way mute.
He plays them many a merry love song
And strikes his lute.

The Two Doves

Under the winding archway,
By the crookéd stair,
Cold is the stone—as velvet
Black is the air.

Crouching the thief must listen,
But none else creep
Up to the roof of a turret
Of the city asleep.

Great beams block in darkness
His path unknown,
Till he wrests at the door to the leads
On the stair of stone.

Sudden the blinding moonlight
With stars aloof,
Forks and spires of the city
And peaks of the roof.

And in dewy light before him
With naught between
White doves of the princess Aileen
Their feathers preen.

But while the prize he wrought for
He counts his own,
The great dog howls from the court
And both are flown.

Rumpelstiltzkin

THE MAIDEN SPEAKS.

All, all alone, no kind friend by,
O little dwarf, I sob and cry,
The King in pride my father told
That I from straw can spin pure gold.
But truly Dwarf, I cannot so,
No magic art at all I know.
So I was seized, and all alone
Sit prison'd in this tow'r of stone.
Unless these trusses I can spin
To yellow gold ere day peeps in,
With my poor father standing by
In the great market I must die.
My little ring I'll give to thee,
O courtly Dwarf, spin, spin, for me!

Flowers of Mab's Grotto

The pimpernel, the shepherd's weather glass,
Who sees the first cloud in the summer sky,
And closes fast his scarlet-petalled cup
Lest any rain-drop fall. The speedwell blue
That from the grass cries fortune and good luck.
The green-stemmed silvery messenger-of-Spring,
Nursed in bleak airs when earth was winter-white,
But lingering yet to say "Did I speak true?"
The celandine whose season is the swift's
With them awaking drooping when they fly.
The anemony, torn by the riotous winds,
Like the white foam upon the dolphin's back,
And stained like it with purple of the sea.

Willow River

By bridges spanned, with many a twist and curve,
The stream runs swift through wet marsh-marigold.
To-night 'tis better not to look nor swerve,
'Tis fairy time, or near, and bitter cold.
The willow droops her long hair in a dream,
Be hence, far hence, ye goblins of the stream.

No sense of distance left, no birds to sing,
But silence only and no moon to-night.
And still this ripple sets a-fluttering
The sunken stars like moths by candlelight.
The willow droops her long hair in a dream,
Be hence, far hence, ye goblins of the stream.

One taper shining far away or near,
The tide flows not at all, the mist hangs grey.
The night-jar creaks,—who bears the lantern there!—
All phantasy, away, I say, away!
The willow droops her long hair in a dream,
Be hence, far hence, ye goblins of the stream.

“There’s a Bird-Note in My Song.”

Philomel at close of day
 Sweetly tells her true-love tale.
Starlings sing not, what do they?
 Strut and chatter, talk and rail.
 Little garden owls repeat
 To the moon their wood-notes sweet.

But the thrush with speckled breast
 Sings each song a second time.
Lesser verse suits others best,
 Only thrushes speak in rhyme.
 Starlings as the whole world knows,
 Outcast starlings, speak in prose.

London

I love her well by day but best by night,
Blue London with her lanterns all alight.

A Health

Not to the man-at-arms or mariner,
I drink the merry long-haired lute-player.

The Bronze Grotesque by Magdalen Bridge

(BOER WAR MEMORIAL)

O England, England, rather let us be
By kind oblivion buried than by thee.

The Cigar

In Indian glen
With cunning thought
Grave turbaned men
The marvel wrought.

Light, untold worth,
Rise smoky rings,
Grave lamp shine forth,
The poet sings,

Whose thoughts beat higher
As this thing dies,
So from the fire,
Doth Phoenix rise.

The Poet's Quill

His pen erewhile was oftimes of the goose
A night-crow's now shall serve his further use.
The Frolic's cap he layeth this while down,
For staff and vellum and a hooded gown.

His Lady of Poetry

Lady, that lingered here while candles shone,
While yellow candles were the only light,
While heavy snow fell deeply in the night
And turned the river to a cold grey stone,
And field and road and footpath all were one;
Now windows open and the skies are bright
Unseen, unheard, you steal from me in flight.
What pleasure brings May-day if you be gone?
But ere the snow-drop dared to show his spear
To threat the frost within his own demesne,
And challenge Winter of the sullen looks,
While curtains yet were drawn and fires burned
clear,
You lingered still, and taught me all unseen
To prison laughter in the leaves of books.

The Raven and the Swallow

A swallow with the sunlight on her breast
Dropped me a feather, crying, "Poet, blest
With knowledge of all beauty, write a song
With this small quill, for summer stays not long;
And for a token sing with merry throat
As sweet and haunting as the swallow's note."
I wrote, but all too soon the summer died,
The swallow flew; then looking I espied
A raven sitting in a holm-oak tree,
And said, "O, Bird of Wisdom, counsel me."
He said, "O Poet, to your song be true,
Fly not away as silly swallows do;
Winter, as summer, shall be sweet and kind
If you as I be lord of your own mind.
Take now this token, let your singing be
Lofty and grave as fits the time and thee."
He plucked me then a feather from his wing;
I sing, but not as I was wont to sing.

The Effigy

(TO ARTHUR F. BELL.)

In Spring put violets in my hand,
When Autumn cometh a strip of heather.
To know how it fares in your own fair land,
When I and past years lie all together.

Does sunlight crimson the thatch and stone?
Is earth grown grey in her icy tether?
Hot and cold are to me as one,
That with all the seasons sleep together.

Are we bruised and faded, or on your lips
Do our songs yet live, ah, tell me whether,
If on my seas rode the older ships,
Pity the past and me together.

And for past grace one rose so free
Pluck from the scented summer weather,
For last year's rose is ill to see
That sleeps with the dead years all together.

And yet do not, strew, strew, for me,
Nor this, nor that, I love not either,
For the rose she kissed and I and she,
And a thousand ages sleep together.

Readiness

There is no man that fears, as Raleigh saith,
For death but only for the time of death.

Two Painters

(MICELANGELO. TURNER.)

A land of grey bleak starlight still the same,
Where Autumn walks not with her crimson flame,
Where never dawn woke shepherd from his sleep,
But every season like his fellow came.

Where no sweet gales make music in the leaves
Of trees in Spring, not winter here bereaves
The cottage garden of a Christmas rose,
Nor ever swallow built beneath the eaves.

But reeds are not for this metropolis
Nor plummets for that infinite abyss
Where soar or stand earth's elemental brood.
—Only the lights of jewels were not his.

These things a later master must devise,—
He at whose magic faery cities rise
Where sunlit galleys sail the gleaming sea,
Or antique Carthage lives for modern eyes.

Whose brush could all Heaven's liquid splendour
trace ;
And in that last and wretched dwelling place,
His god, the Sun, forsook him not at death
But through the lattice gently kissed his face.

The Ends of Verse

"To what end is the verse and what gain?"
—The rabble's cry—
The tale of a clerk and a prince
Of a day gone by;

He forbad men should wring for silver
And bleed fine gold.
And the flashing prize they brought him
Unsummed, untold,

Their priceless heaps, from starlight
He flung to the praise
Of the dweller in crypts, the shadow,
And ender of days.

This was a legend but look,
As we see it now,
On the valley, with its use, and the peasant
Driving the plough.

Higher are the scanty uplands
Sparse slopes and steep,
With their use, and the careful shepherd
Driving the sheep.

But higher is the peak that highest,
Blooms as the rose.
With what use to the stranded scaler
Who dies in the snows ?

But there do the broad suns redden
And the twilights rise,
And the stars, and the new lights quicken
As the last light dies.

We that have thought and paper
Seek no man to give,
Content with the God's gift in us
And the thought that shall live

And we hold these things are princely
Beyond eclipse,
And above fraud, trade, and cunning,
Spilt blood and ships.

The Flight of Time

"Time flies" as you said to-night:
I remember yet
The ash you let fall so light
From your cigarette.

But he who used first the phrase
Far otherwise,
Stood fixed that while in his days
And bright were his eyes.

For a word with no truth is fraught,
To give it you,
Till the soul is that instant caught
With "Christ! how true!"

'Tis so, with the thought in me,
Time wears away,
And future and past I see,
But not to-day,

For future and past time stands,
More fixed than all ;
But now—as I speak—these sands,
These rose-leaves fall.

And the whole world is but lead
In time's abyss.
*With the hand of a man long dead
I once wrote this.*

Time at a Window

The day has fled for a truth,
And the purple steeds unyoke,
Fled like the dreams of youth,
And the shadow of smoke.

The dun eclipses the gold
Of the shimmering sea,
And a face from out of the cold
Stares in upon me.

As of old can I meet his gaze
Unblenched, without fear,
Or read the scroll of my days
At my twentieth year?

"New lamps, new lamps, for the old,"
Is his scoff to-day;
"The brass you have, but the gold
You have given away.

“ The hours of your life-days creep
To be choked with dust
Your knowledge has gone to sleep
With ease and with rust.”

In his eyes I will look my fill,
Whatsoever he saith,
Though the blood in my veins run chill
As I gazed upon Death.

And I swear, while his wings unfold
And he fades from view,
That the dross shall again be gold,
And all scoured new.

Survey

Where men love wars let each subscribe his groat,
And save the sick and cut the strong man's throat.
Where priests abound no folly shall we want,
But let them live and live still ignorant.
To garbage-eaters let their press relate
The final capture and the murderer's fate.
For some in every age will love the sun,
Winds, streams, and stars, of which train count me
 one.

Post Vitam

Shall thy rich monument be cut in brass,
And shall thy name be graved where thou shalt
lie ?

Thus dost thou ponder whilst thy life-days pass
Even as a mill-race that runs ceaselessly ?

Only thy sweet verse written now and then
Between the white rows of the apple-trees,
But fame and chronicle hold countless men
That have won honour by such acts as these.

All this is deemed heroic and not base
Thou honouredst,—dids't love the sea and air,
Spring-tide and harvest and the moon's grave pace ;
And with slight destiny did'st greatly dare.

But yet not thine to perish in sea-wreck
Where strange fish swim, nor, for just cause and
right,
To lie pricked through thine honour void of fleck,
Where hoar-frost and red rust the mailed shoes
bite.

The brave sun sinks, Night's mantling wings out-
spread,
And toilers leave the fields when he goes down.
I would lie greatly with the honoured dead,
Although in life I never wore a crown.

Winter Night

Within my chamber as I lay
At dead midnight,
The moon at full, all silver-grey
Or silver-white,
One moonbeam wrought transmutably,
And at that hour
Stood forth a maiden pale to see
As any flower,
Down the white limbs her black locks bare
Fell without fold.
Pale were her brows and crownèd there
With thin pale gold.
What message brought, or from what skies
What man shall say?
But the dark sorrows from her eyes
Died not away.

Care's Leave-Taking

Care wasteth, wasteth, hope wins everything.
The singing lark the skies doth climb and scale,
The tuneless raven may not quit the dale.

Care, to my shame, as though thou wert a king,
I bowed my head and gave thee leave to rail,
Care wasteth, wasteth, hope wins everything,
The singing lark the skies doth climb and scale.

Now at thy merry parting will I sing,
I front about, thou shalt no more prevail,
And with this song I drive thee from the pale,

Care wasteth, wasteth, hope wins everything.
The singing lark the skies doth climb and scale,
The tuneless raven may not quit the dale.

SOME PRESS COMMENTS ON "THE RAVEN AND THE SWALLOW."

"We much prefer 'The Raven and the Swallow' to most volumes of undergraduate's verse that have appeared recently. Mr. Hare's muse is as yet a slight one and a dainty, but there is more of the true feeling of poetry in it than in many a more ambitious volume. What we prize most in the book is the happiness of many of the shorter poems, little four line snatches or two-line epigrams in which the author has rounded off a croak of the Raven or a twitter of the Swallow. We have room for two little specimens of the writer's diversity of mood. Hear the Raven on—

'THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

'Come countrymen, and view with glowing heart
The National Gallery of Foreign Art!'

and the Swallow on—

'CHILDREN AMONG THE GRAVES.

'O light light tread,
And laughter sweet,
O little feet
Where lie the dead.'

The last (perfect of its kind) is perhaps the best thing in the book. Mr. Hare's more substantial pieces do not as yet keep to a level of uniform excellence. The ballad of 'Youth Rides Forth,' however is very good. It should be mentioned that no piece in the book is of more than ballad length, and the

reader will find some note to please in nearly all of them. The poems are assigned on no very strict classification to 'The Raven and the Swallow,' and sometimes even we seem to hear them in a duet, as in

'The Puritan through life's sweet garden goes
To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose,
And hopes to please by this peculiar whim
The God who fashioned it and gave it him.'

—*The Isis.*

"By the courtesy of the Holywell Press we have seen the proofs of 'The Raven and the Swallow' and we congratulate Mr. Hare on his first venture. The book is uneven, but promising; and with greater experience in technique, Mr. Hare should go far. Of the longer pieces the 'King's Vision,' and the 'Pageant of Night' pleased us most; of the shorter the charming little 'Song from Ronsard,' and the fragment of blank verse, entitled 'Arthur Embarking.' The volume is described as Songs and Lyrics, but not the least effective of its contents are the scattered epigrams in couplet or quatrain. 'The Puritan' especially is excellent."—*The Varsity.*



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